

January 27, 2009

State Capitol Building
Health & Human Services Subcommittee
P.O. Box 201706
Helena, MT 59620-1706

RE: Medicaid (Physical Disability) Waiver Program


I am writing to you in support of the Medicaid Waiver Program. My son, Connor, has been on the waiver program since the fall of 2007.

Connor has severe spastic quadriplegic cerebral palsy. If that sounds scary to you, you can imagine how it felt to me when my only child was diagnosed with it when he was one year old. He had a stroke *in utero*, and as a result he cannot walk, he cannot talk, he cannot use his hands, or eat normally. He has had a feeding tube and has a seizure disorder. He is dependent on his father and me for all of his daily needs.

Honestly the only way to describe the waiver program for our family is a godsend. Connor was on the Part C Early Intervention Program, my husband and I both work, and we pay for health insurance. It still didn't come close to helping with the expenses we were incurring in taking care of our son. These kids don't come with instruction manuals, and the stress was taking a real toll on our ability to be good parents to this little one. He obtained a slot after 6 months on the waitlist, and I honestly do not know how much more debt we were going to be able to take on at that point. Connor has to have therapy five days a week, he has test after test, surgery, hospitalizations, specialist evaluations. All of his daily needs require some type of special equipment, prescriptions, modifications, or assistance. The waiver program allows my husband and me to work by providing us with a special day care provider capable of taking care of Connor. The waiver program makes all of that possible for us, and we absolutely could not take care of him without it.

Connor is a typical 3 ½ year old, and our only wish is to give him all the opportunities that other kids his age have. So I want to especially, from the bottom of my heart, thank each and every one of you personally for this program, for what you have done to help us care for this very special child. And I want to encourage you to find the ability to fund additional slots, to help other parents who, like us, face emotional and financial disaster from the needs of caring for a child with a physical disability.

Sincerely,



Kelly A. Casillas

Cc: Jeanne Underhill, RN
Lewis & Clark City-County Health Department
1930 Ninth Avenue
Helena, MT 59601

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DATE Jan 27, 09
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